Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide, characterized in that the total mole number of Ce and Zr is at least 85% based on the total mole number of metal in the composite metal oxide, a molar ratio Ce/Zr is within a range from 1/9 to 9/1, and an isoelectric point of the composite metal oxide is more than 3.5.

2. (Original) The cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide according to claim 1, wherein the molar ratio Ce/Zr is within a range from 3/7 to 7/3 and the isoelectric point is within a range from 3.8 to 5.0.

3. (Currently Amended) The cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, which contains rare earth metal (excluding Ce) in a concentration of less than 15% by mole based on the total mole number of metal in the composite metal oxide.

4. (Original) A cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide, characterized in that the total mole number of Ce and Zr is at least 85% based on the total mole number of metal in the composite metal oxide and CeO_2 forms a core surrounded by ZrO_2.

5. (Original) The cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide according to claim 4, wherein the CeO_2 core has a diameter within a range from 5 to 20 nm.

6. (Currently Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ Claim 1 and a noble metal supported on the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for synthesizing the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, which comprises mixing a ceria sol and a zirconium compound solution or a zirconia sol to prepare a suspension, and drying and firing the mixture.

8. (New) The cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide according to claim 2, which contains rare earth metal (excluding Ce) in a concentration of less than 15% by mole based on the total mole number of metal in the composite metal oxide.

9. (New) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 2 and a noble metal supported on the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide.

10. (New) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 3 and a noble metal supported on the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide.

11. (New) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 4 and a noble metal supported on the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide.

12. (New) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 5 and a noble metal supported on the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide.

13. (New) A method for synthesizing the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 2, which comprises mixing a ceria sol and a zirconium compound solution or a zirconia sol to prepare a suspension, and drying and firing the mixture.

14. (New) A method for synthesizing the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 3, which comprises mixing a ceria sol and a zirconium compound solution or a zirconia sol to prepare a suspension, and drying and firing the mixture.

15. (New) A method for synthesizing the cerium-zirconium composite metal oxide of claim 4, which comprises mixing a ceria sol and a zirconium compound solution or a zirconia sol to prepare a suspension, and drying and firing the mixture.